

Chicken shit wakeup call

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Not three feet away, a beady eye stared at me as I opened my eyes. I blinked rapidly to reassess the scene. Instantaneously believing my eyesight was playing tricks rather than believe the reality in front of me. My heart jumped as my brain raced to fill in the gaps of what I was seeing and what I had missed while I was taking a nap.

A chicken, I concluded. My heart calmed a little as the adrenalin stopped producing. The beady eye moved as the chicken cocked its head sideways. Its other eye became visible in the move. The flapping and rustle of its wings must have startled me in my sleep as it alighted on my bed. Without any warning the chicken's tail feathers cocked forward as it squatted slightly to release a marbled shit on my white bed sheet. Satisfied it had done what it came to do, it flapped to the floor and headed for the open door, its talons clackety-clacking on the wooden floor. All too much for my brain to comprehend in the 10 seconds it had taken for all of this to happen.

I gathered my senses. Arsehole! I yelled after it. I had just changed the sheets that morning. Seriously, how many people in the world have to wash their bedsheets because of chicken shit? I wondered.

As I rose from the bed, the brightly coloured curtain draped over the window beside me, slapped me in the face aided by a large gust of wind. The gust brought a chill with it, threatening pending rain. Great, I thought. My sheets on the line are probably dry by now. Before I had made it to the doorstep where the chicken had crossed less than thirty seconds before me the first fat drops of rain fell. By the bottom of the four steps, it was a deluge. Like a cloud burst. I could see the dark stain splotches of raindrops colouring the newly dried dark blue bedsheets 20 steps away. I ran, grabbing the first one off the line, regardless of pegs that went flying with the force of my yanking. Bundling the first sheet under my arm I reached for the second one yanking again. The far peg flew off, the closest didn't. So, the far sheet-end flapped down to the newly wet and muddy ground. I swore under my breath.

Retrieving the sodden sheet, I abandoned the pillowcases to their wet fate on the clothes line and headed back inside blinded by the force and size of the rain drops as the heavens urinated on me. Stepping on the top step a loud squawk startled me and I lost my footing stumbling sideways, stepping on a newly laid egg which consequently enabled my foot to slide out under me. I threw my hands out to brace my fall as I hit the deck. The chicken skittered over the top of me and out the door again obviously deciding to risk its fate to the storm rather than the potty-mouthed, clumsy footed human inside who had just killed a potential offspring. So, much for leaving a sorry egg. It must have done a U-turn and re-entered the house as I went to grab the sheets.

While my hands went out to save me the sheets went flying. One sheet got caught on the chicken's foot as it exited the door, which it then was dragging with it. Feathers flapped, more squawking ensued before it finally freed itself. One sheet was at the bottom of the stairs in a puddle of mud, the other was draped over the stairs at the mercy of Mother Nature.

I swore again. My ankle had rolled in my slide and the pain now shot up my leg. I looked around me for something to grab onto to ease myself up. The dry sheets were now a write off, and there was egg shell and contents smeared all over the floor and that newly dumped chicken shit visible on my bed.

As my gaze reached baby's cot, he screamed. Awakened and startled by the escalating commotion. The rain pummelled the tin roof relentlessly above us as I tried to calm baby with soft cooing noises from my splayed position across the room.

An almighty unison of wailing pierced the air. It was coming from the neighbour's house, 20 metres away.

'Oooooo Tata,' I could hear amongst the screams and wails. It could only mean one thing. The elderly grandfather next door had passed away.

I sighed heavily, and then the tears came. The adrenalin rush of three minutes ago had dissipated and whatever refreshing good the twenty-minute nap had done, the last three minutes had drained the account.

Fat pent up tears rolled down my cheeks as baby's wails quietened, curious as to why I was competing with him when I was clearly sitting on the floor, wide awake doing nothing. Not to be outdone the momentary lapse dissipated and he started up again.

I cried, baby cried, the neighbours cried, the heavens cried. Each of us for a different reason.